



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



# Robinson State Park Trail System Master Plan

October 6, 2025- Public Meeting

Photo by BSC Group





# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

**Maura T. Healey**

Lieutenant Governor

**Kimberley Driscoll**

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary

**Rebecca L. Tepper**

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

**Nicole LaChapelle**



# DCR Mission

*To protect, promote and enhance our  
common wealth of natural, cultural  
and recreational resources  
for the well-being of all.*



# Core Principles



## Our Core Principles:

**Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences & unique landscapes**

that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming



2



**Conserve lands, water, and forests**

by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources

**Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts**

by implementing sustainable practices & advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, & resources



4



**Support healthy communities**

by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other

**Inspire generations of stewards**

by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education





# Meeting Logistics



Photo: Robinson State Park

## During the meeting:

- ▶ Use Q&A feature – comments go to moderator
- ▶ Raise your hand using the Zoom function, and you will be given permissions to unmute and speak

## After the meeting, through November 6th:

- ▶ DCR Public Comments
  - ▶ <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>

*Please note that this public meeting is being recorded; the recording will be public record*



# Agenda

- Introduction to Project and Team
- Project Goals
- Planning Process and Timeline
- Inventory and Analysis Maps
  - Current Trails and Conditions
  - Sensitive Resources Areas
- Community Input
  - Stakeholder Meeting
  - Public Meeting





# Trail Planning Process - Today

## 1. Get to Know the Property

- Trail Inventory
- Resource Area Mapping
- Identify Critical Management Roads
- Assess Use Patterns and Demand
- Involve Collaborators

## 2. Identify Points of Interest and Experiences

- Identify Main Parking and Access Points
- Identify Critical Connections
- Survey Users to Understand Desired Recreational Experiences

## 3. Identify Constraints, Issues and Problem Areas

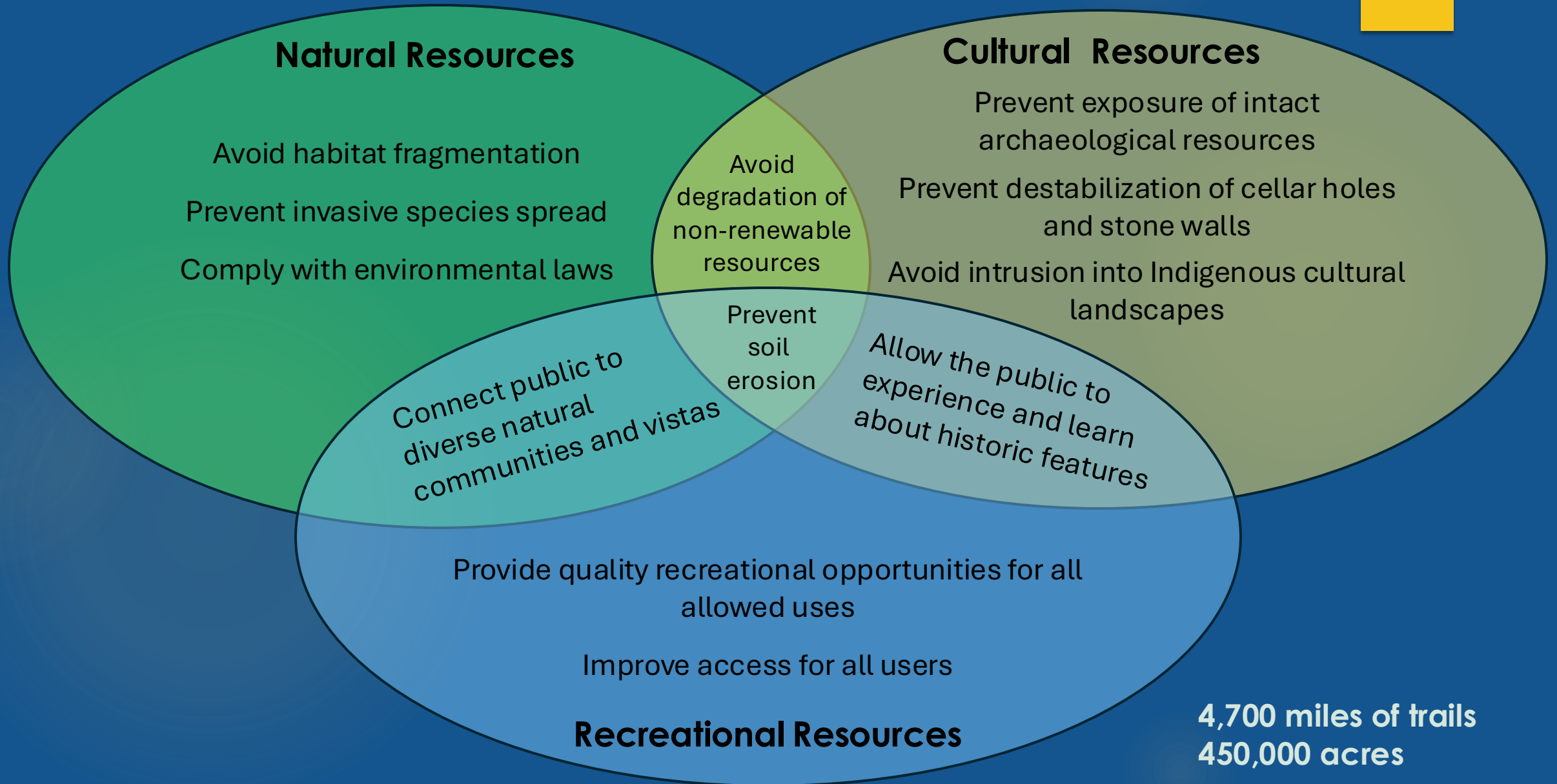
- Highlight Trail Problem Areas
- Identify Redundant Trails
- Identify Culturally and Ecologically Sensitive Areas

## 4. Make a Plan

- Establish a sustainable trail system/network for the park
- Re-route and Restore Problem Trails
- Identify Stewardship Partners and Opportunities
- Identify Necessary Trail Use Policies
- Develop Education and Enforcement Strategies



# Trail Network Planning with DCR's Mission in Mind



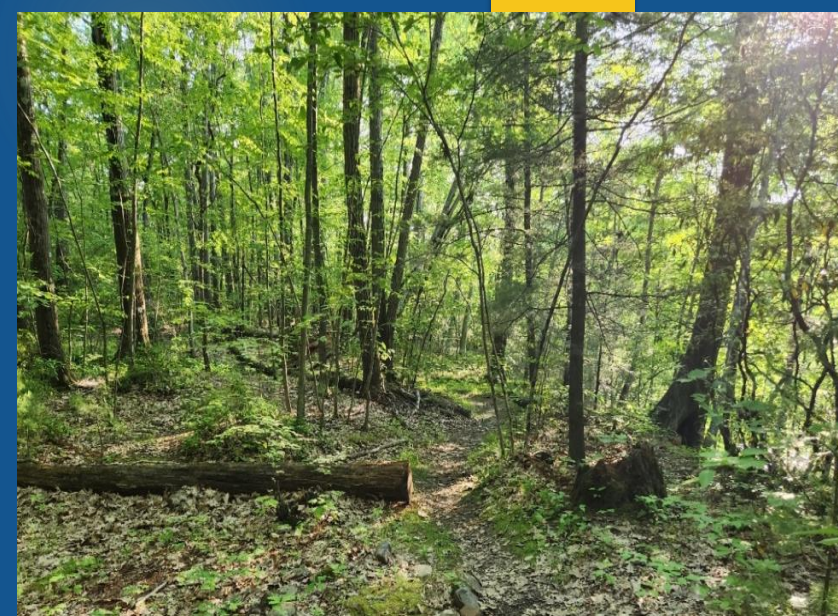




Pollinator/Wildlife Field



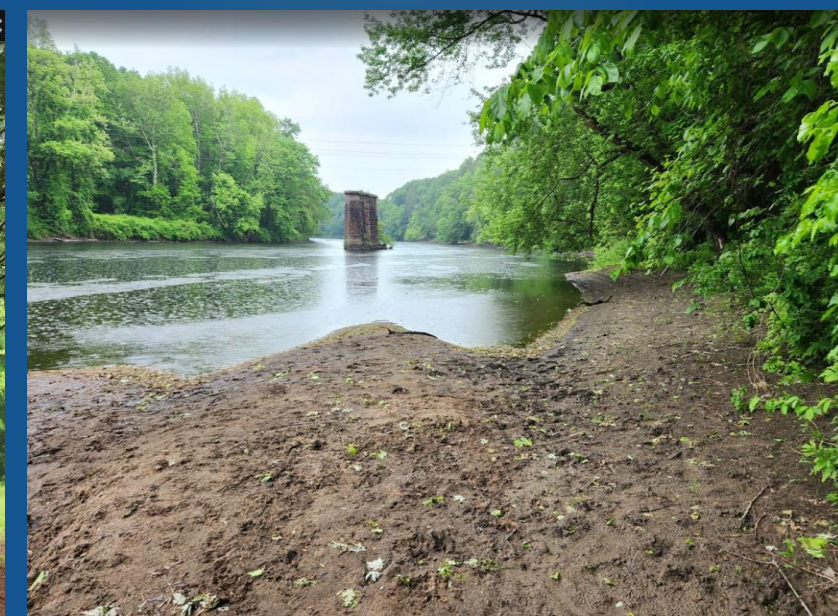
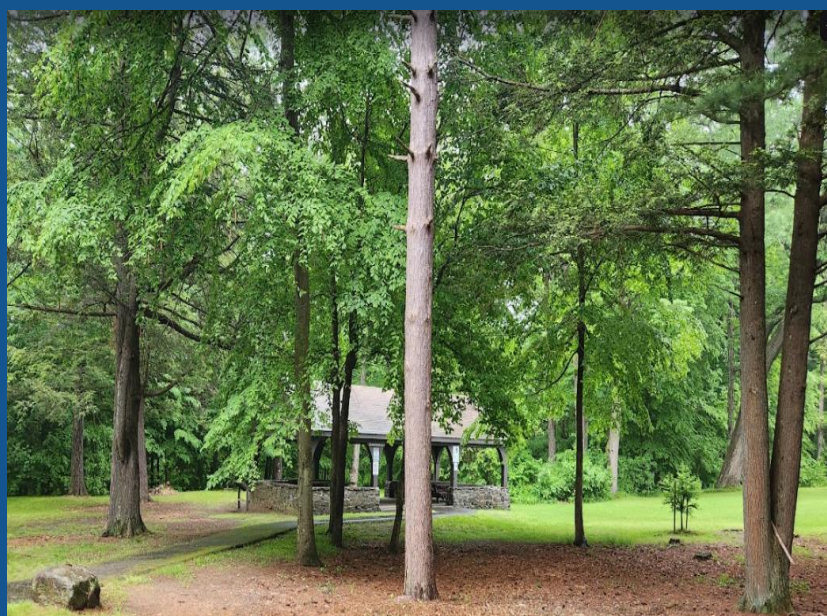
CCC Historic Structures and Landscapes



Trail Based Recreational Opportunities



Robinson Pond, Fishing Derby



Boating/Fishing Access, Westfield River



# Trail System Plans

## TRAIL SYSTEM / HABITAT MANAGMENT PLAN

DCR

## Myles Standish State Forest



(Photo by Paul Jahnige)

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## Section 6. Recommendations

### 6.1 Curtail Illegal Motorized Recreational Use of the Forest and Illegal Trail Creation

- Continue to exclude off-road vehicles from the property
- Engage rangers, Environmental Police and local police to enforce rules around motorized use and illegal trail creation to the full extent possible including fines and vehicle impoundment.
- Install signage to clearly communicate OHV restrictions.
- Install gates where appropriate to restrict vehicle access.



### 6.2 Close / Naturalize Unauthorized Trails that are Damaging to Sensitive Resources, in Poor Condition, Redundant, Confusing or Otherwise Not Desired by DCR.

- Finalize an MOU with DFG to establish procedures for DCR / DFG communication and cooperation and designate legal trails in the WMAs.

- Close / naturalize many trails in WMAs not needed for wildlife management and access.
- Close un-authorized trails, especially those in northwest and west of forest.
- Close trails impacting coastal plain pond shores or frost pockets.



- Simplify / close trails in the Bentley loop area to enhance this recreational loop opportunity.
- Reduce overall trail density.

### 6.3 Close trails using a multi-pronged trail closure approach.

Successful trail closures are difficult, especially in parks like MSSF. Appendix B, "Closing and Restoring Trails" details a multi-pronged approach to trail closures that can be successful. It involves:

- User education that provides information through a variety of venues about why we are closing trails and the benefits of staying off those trails.



# Trail System Plan

## Anticipated Results

Develop/promote a network of sustainable trails by prioritizing trail amendments & maintenance needs



Enhanced partners and stewards collaboration



Guide the management of trails within the context of natural and cultural resources



Adapt to changing fiscal, social & environmental conditions



# Trail Planning Timeline

		2025			2026		
Task #	Task	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer+
Phase 1. Area Inventory & Analysis							
1	Trail Inventory						
2	Resource Mapping & Analysis						
3	DCR Staff Meeting						
Phase 2. Trail Options & Preferred Plan							
4	Collaborator Meeting						
5	Public Meeting						
6	Synthesis & Recommendations						
7	Updated Trail Network						
Phase 3. Final Trails Plan							
8	Second Public Meeting						
9	Final Report						
Phase 4. Project planning/permitting							
10	E.g., Data, signage, permitting						

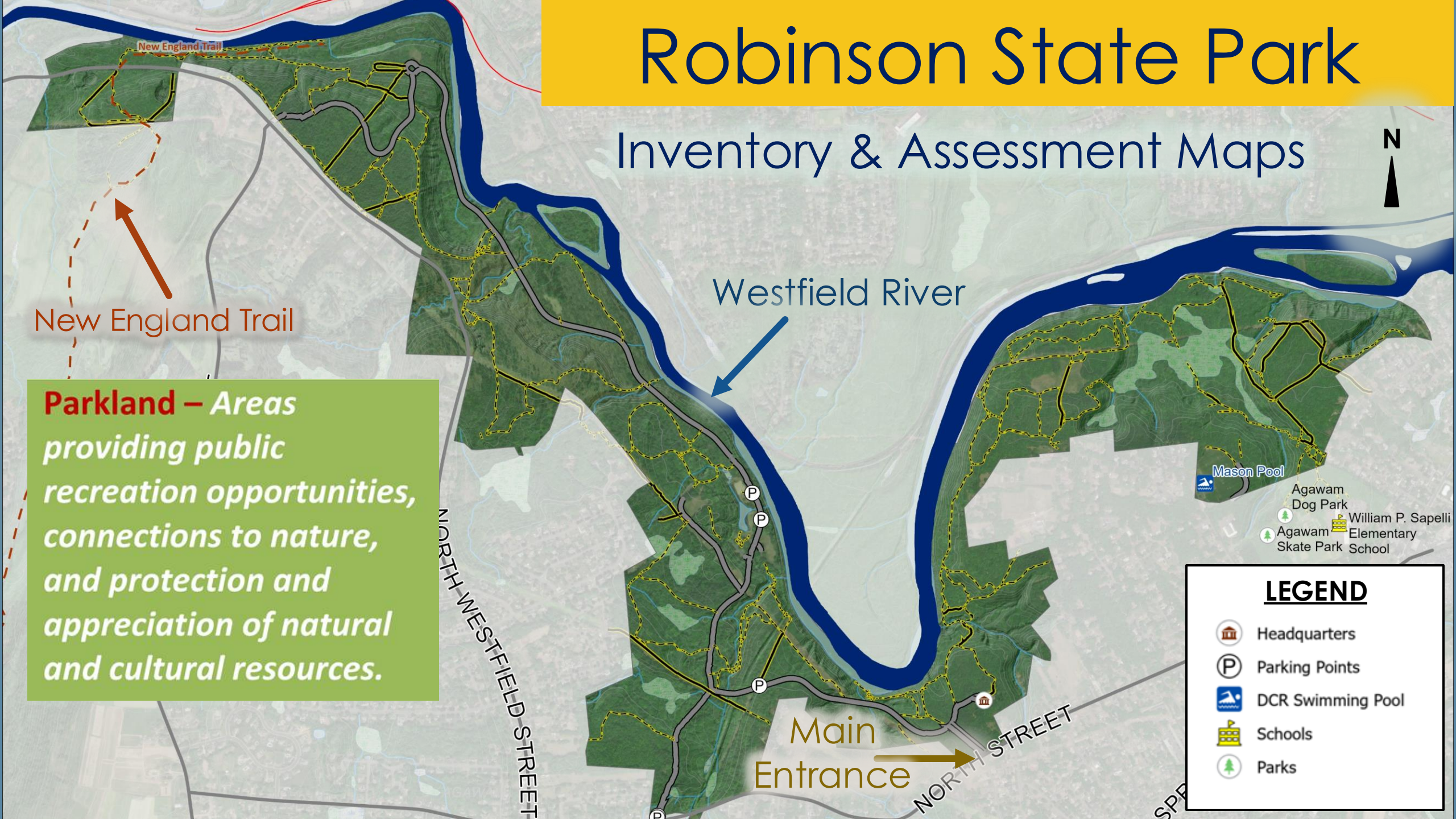


# Inventory & Assessment Identified...

- ▶ High trail densities
- ▶ Impacts to rare species and wildlife
- ▶ Impacts to wetland resources

# Robinson State Park

## Inventory & Assessment Maps





# Existing Trail System (1/3)

## 22.5 Miles of Authorized Trails

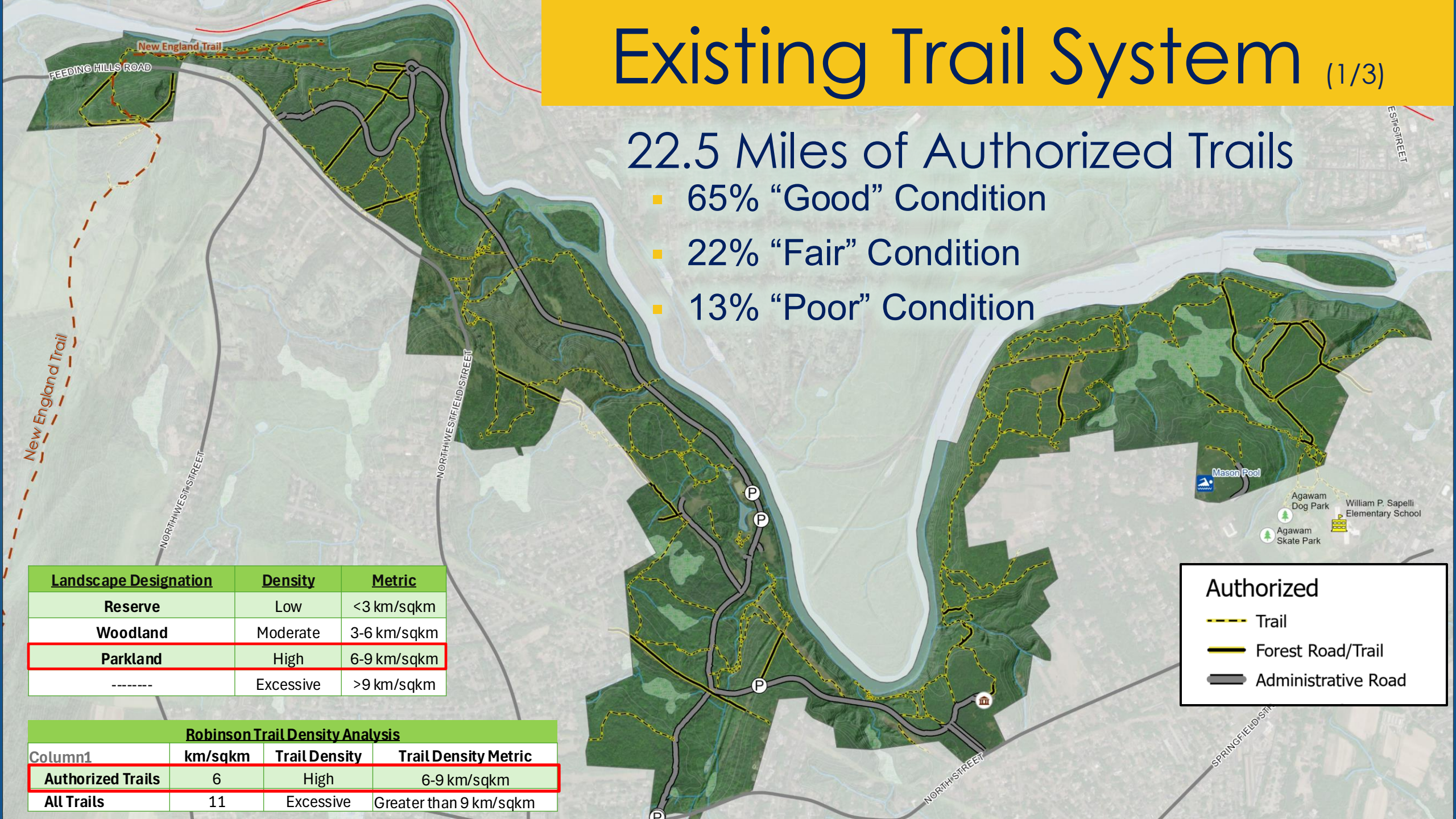
- 65% “Good” Condition
- 22% “Fair” Condition
- 13% “Poor” Condition

Landscape Designation	Density	Metric
Reserve	Low	<3 km/sqkm
Woodland	Moderate	3-6 km/sqkm
Parkland	High	6-9 km/sqkm
-----	Excessive	>9 km/sqkm

Robinson Trail Density Analysis			
Column1	km/sqkm	Trail Density	Trail Density Metric
Authorized Trails	6	High	6-9 km/sqkm
All Trails	11	Excessive	Greater than 9 km/sqkm

### Authorized

- Trail
- Forest Road/Trail
- Administrative Road

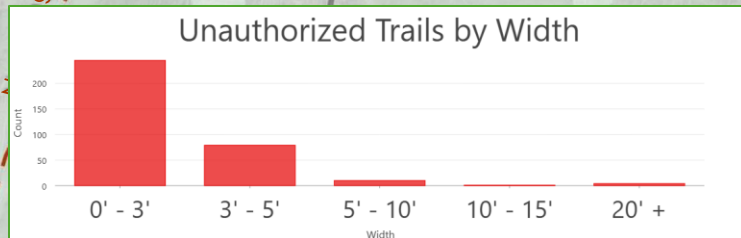




# Existing Trail System (2/3)

## 18 Miles of Unauthorized Trails

- 70% "Fair" Condition
- 30% "Poor" Condition



Landscape Designation	Density	Metric*
Reserve	Low	<3 km/sqkm
Woodland	Moderate	3-6 km/sqkm
Parkland	High	6-9 km/sqkm
-----	Excessive	>9 km/sqkm

Robinson Trail Density Analysis*			
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Authorized Trails	6	High	6-9 km/sqkm
All Trails	11	Excessive	Greater than 9 km/sqkm

### Authorized

- Trail
- Forest Road/Trail
- Administrative Road

### Unauthorized

- Administrative Road
- Forest Road/Trail
- Trail



# Existing Trail System (3/3)

## Trail Conditions & Damage

- 65% "Good" Condition
- 22% "Fair" Condition
- 13% "Poor" Condition

- Erosion & Washouts
- Rutting
- Mud Holes
- Trail Braiding & Widening

### Damage Points

- ⊗ Road Damage
- ⊗ Trail Damage

### Trail Condition

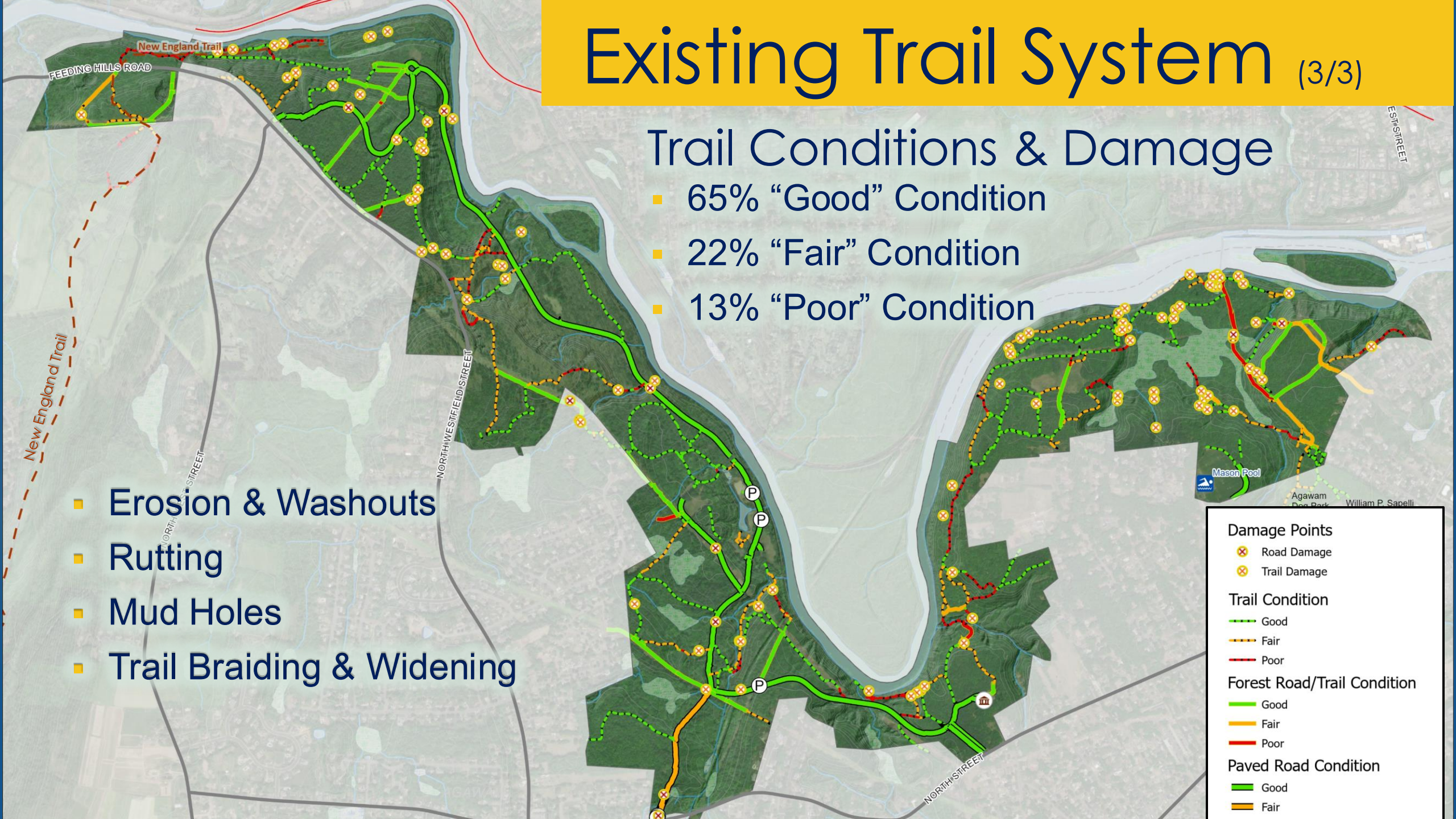
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

### Forest Road/Trail Condition

- Good
- Fair
- Poor

### Paved Road Condition

- Good
- Fair





# Sensitive Resource Areas (1/3)

## RARE SPECIES HABITAT (MESA/NHESP)

- 80.5% is Rare Species Habitat
- 12 Rare Species
  - 2 Animals
  - 4 Plants
  - 6 Insects

For additional information, please visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/regulatory-maps-priority-estimated-habitats>

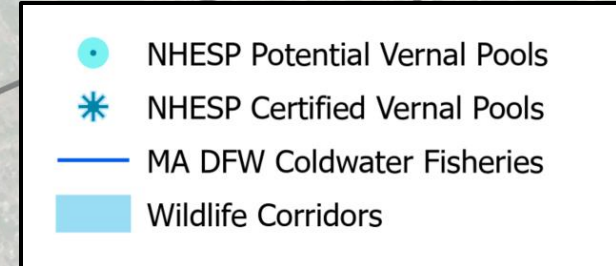
- 
- NHESP Potential Vernal Pools
  - ✱ NHESP Certified Vernal Pools
  - MA DFW Coldwater Fisheries
  - NHESP Priority Habitat



# Sensitive Resource Areas (2/3)

## Wetlands, Waterbodies & Wildlife Corridors

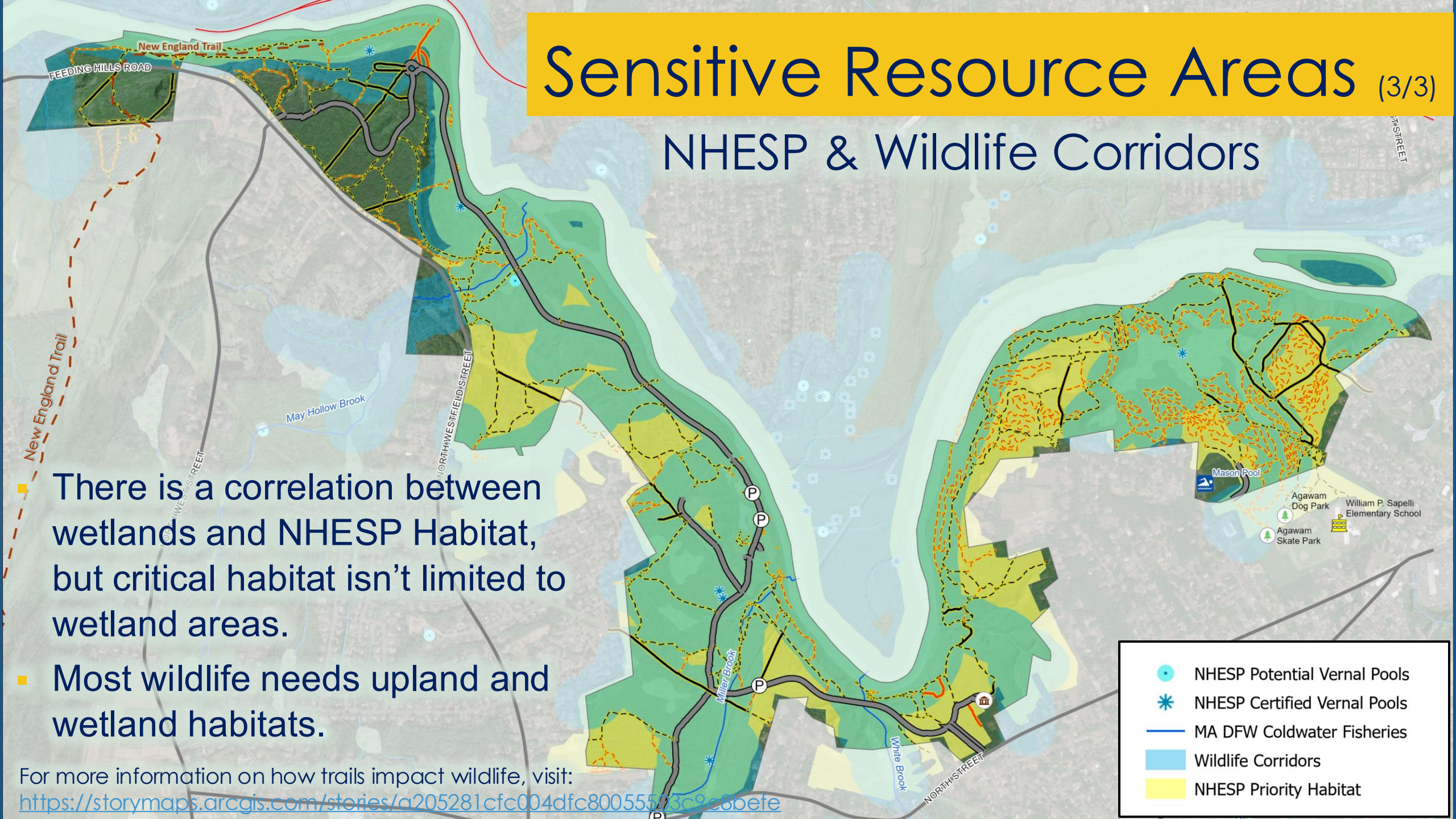
- Rivers, streams and wetlands are critical resources for wildlife
- Function as wildlife corridors





# Sensitive Resource Areas (3/3)

## NHESP & Wildlife Corridors



- There is a correlation between wetlands and NHESP Habitat, but critical habitat isn't limited to wetland areas.
- Most wildlife needs upland and wetland habitats.

For more information on how trails impact wildlife, visit:  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a205281cfc004dfc80055503c2e8befe>

NHESP Potential Vernal Pools

NHESP Certified Vernal Pools

MA DFW Coldwater Fisheries

Wildlife Corridors

NHESP Priority Habitat



# Sensitive Resource Areas

- Natural Heritage Cultural Sensitivity Area
- Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Buildings
- New England Trail
- Indigenous Artifacts & Structures
- 86 Potential Cultural Resources
- 22 Confirmed Cultural Resources



CCC Stone Water Fountain

*The **First Peoples First Stewards Partnership** works to build reciprocal relationships between the DCR and Tribal Governments and Indigenous Community Stakeholders. These relationships will enhance DCR's work through providing an additional lens of culturally responsive stewardship while providing access and opportunities for Native people to connect with the land, water, and our natural world. As part of this project, we have initiated the first steps to collaborating and partnering with Tribal Nations linked to this property.*

# Public Survey Results To-Date

- ▶ 18 responses received to-date for Robinson State Park
  - ▶ 411 total responses received across six Trail System Master Plan projects
- ▶ Predominantly mountain bikers (16) followed by hiking/walking (6), and dog walking (3).
- ▶ Responses are on a scale of 1 to 5 where:
  - ▶ 1 equals STRONGLY DISAGREE
  - ▶ 5 equals STRONGLY AGREE

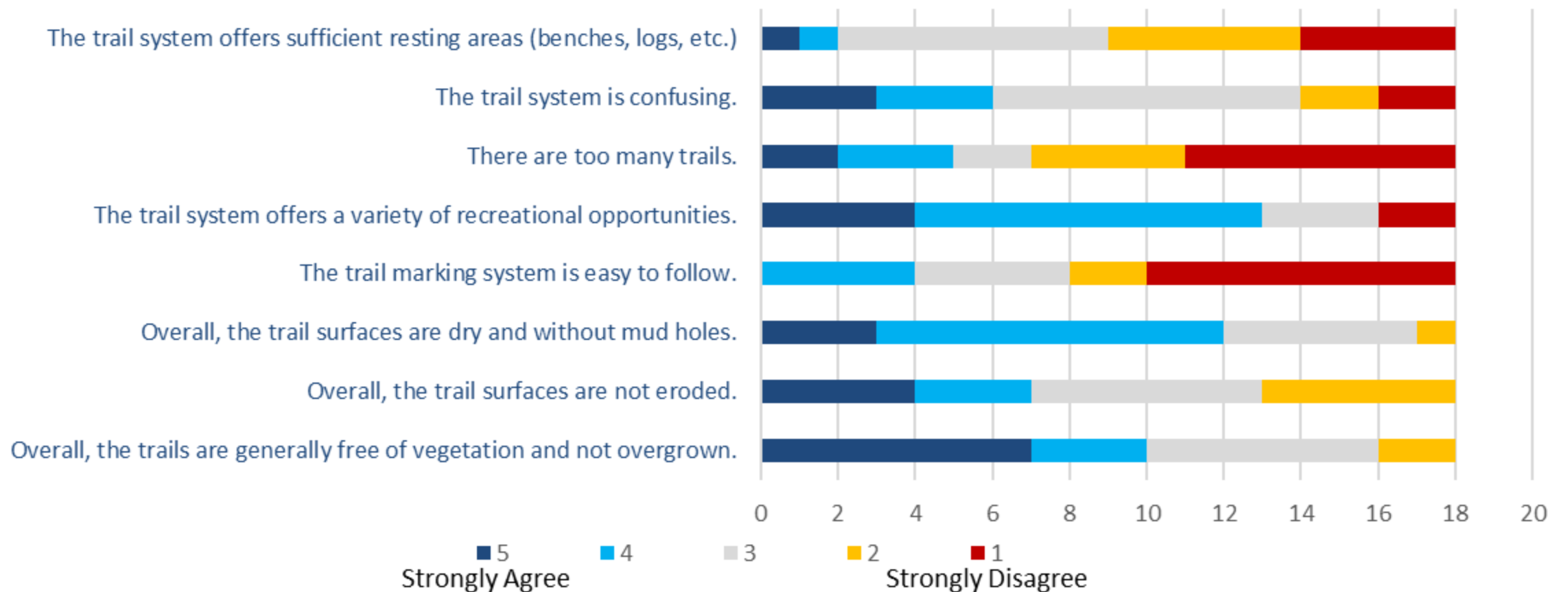
**Surveys are still open. Please encourage others to share their thoughts!**

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/shape-the-future-of-our-trails-share-your-experience>



# Public Survey Results To-Date

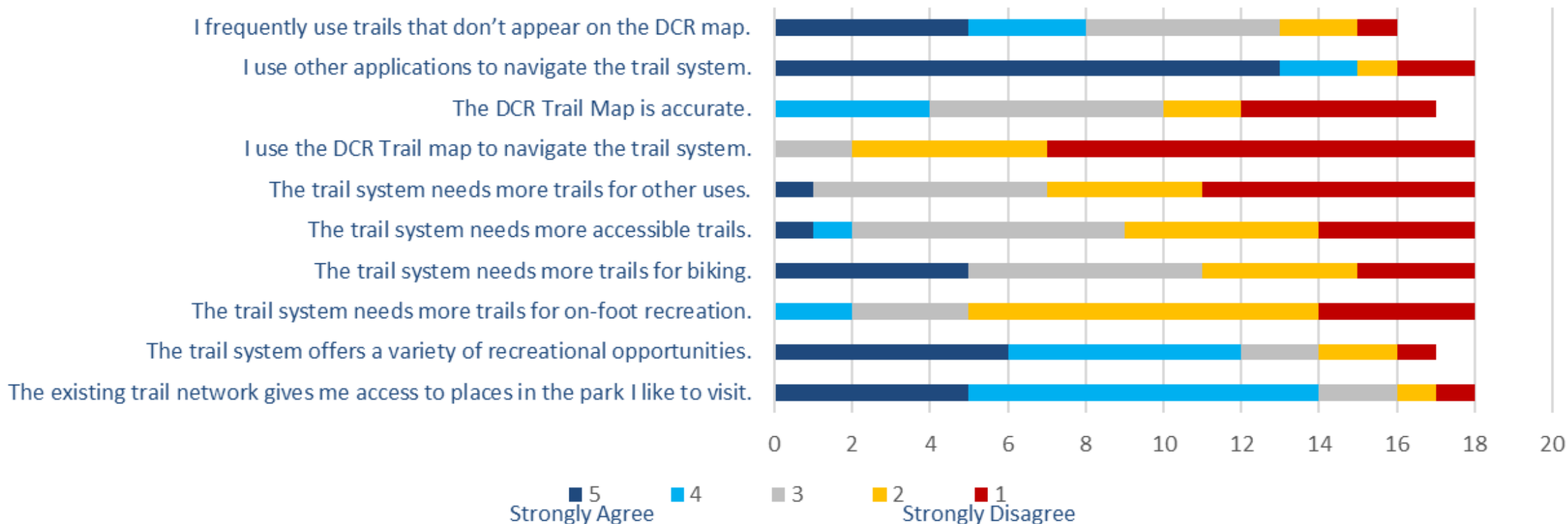
## Overall Trail Condition & Navigability





# Public Survey Results To-Date

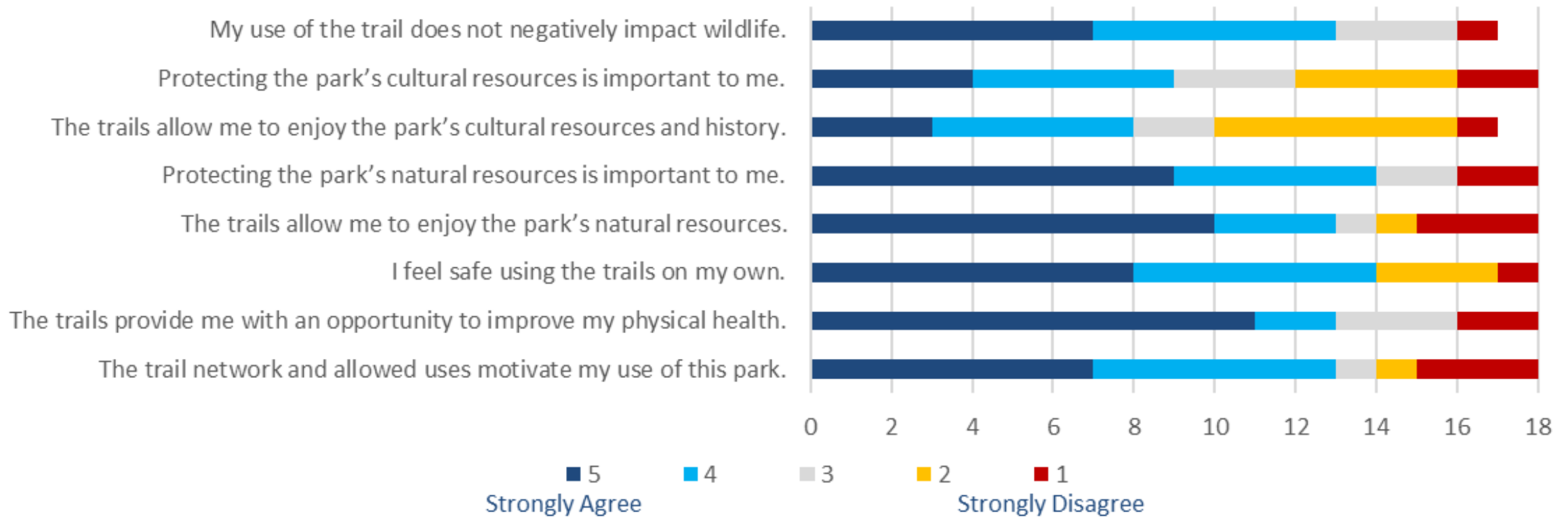
## Site Access and Recreational Opportunities





# Public Survey Results To-Date

## Trail Use Motivation





# Public Comment

## General Guidelines

- Raise your virtual hand
- **Please wait to be recognized by the moderator**
- Introduce yourself as well as any Affiliation (if speaking on behalf of a group)
- To assist us, please make comments in the context of the follow up questions presented in the previous slide and shared in the chat

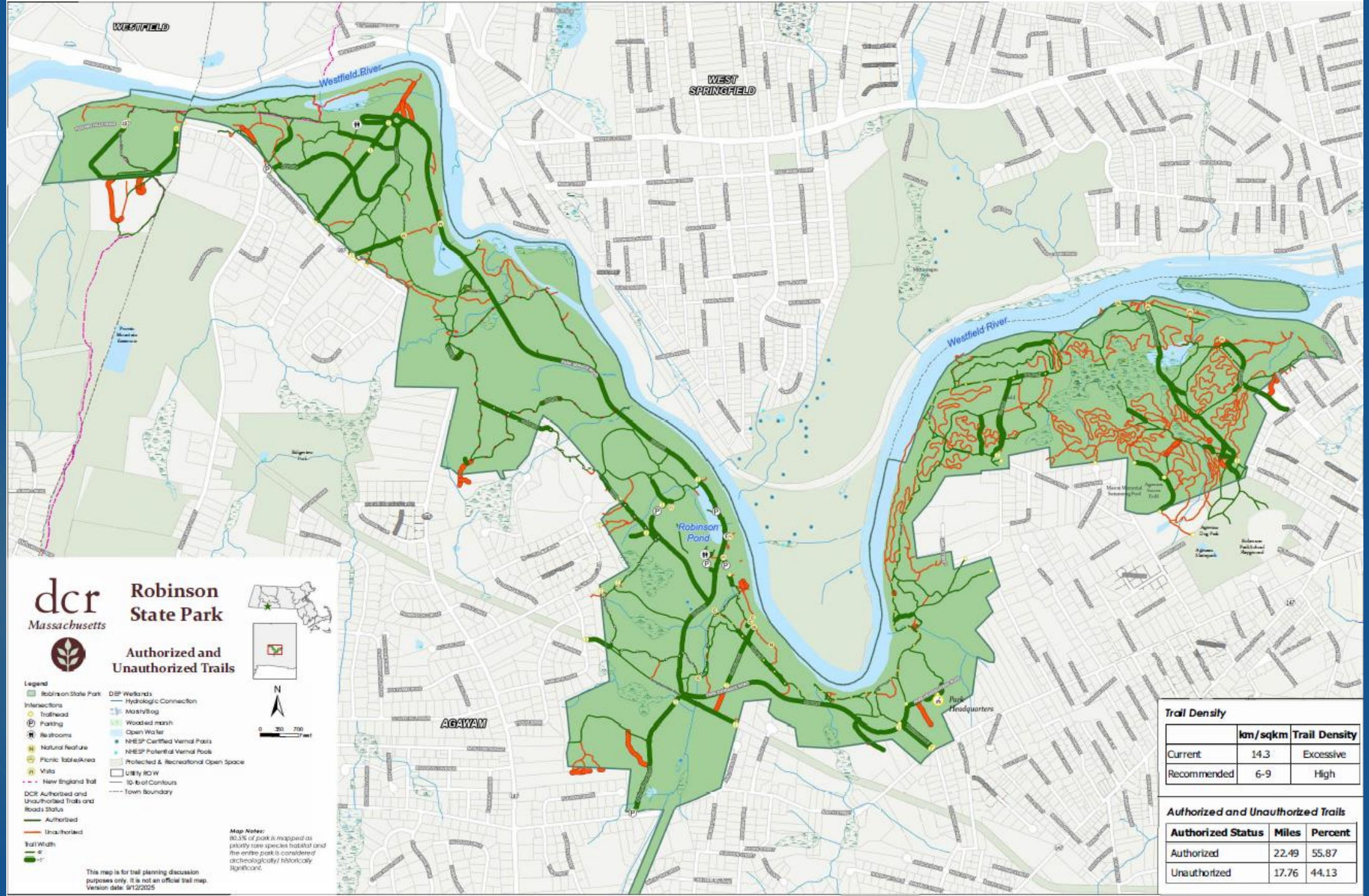




# Discussion Questions

- ▶ How do you use the trails in this park?
- ▶ What is your favorite trail at this park and why?
- ▶ What is your least favorite trail and why?
- ▶ What, if anything, prevents you from fully enjoying the trails at this park?
- ▶ What activities, facilities, or services would make you feel more welcome or more satisfied with your trail experience in this park?
- ▶ What is the biggest challenge facing this park's trails?
- ▶ Any other information about this park's trails that you think is important for us to know





#### Trail Density

	km/sqkm	Trail Density
Current	14.3	Excessive
Recommended	6-9	High

#### Authorized and Unauthorized Trails

Authorized Status	Miles	Percent
Authorized	22.49	55.87
Unauthorized	17.76	44.13



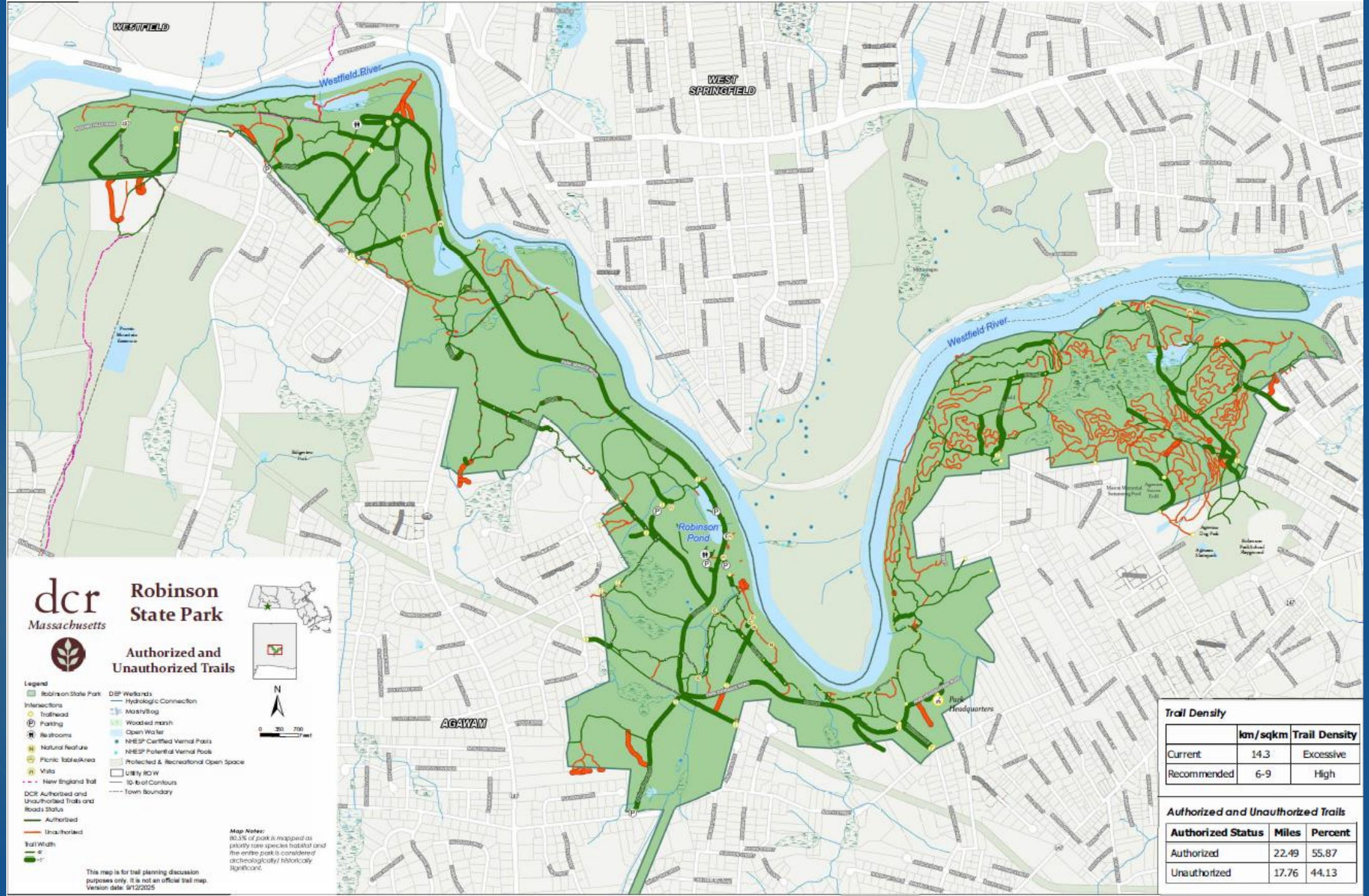
# Next Steps

- **Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:** <https://www.mass.gov/dcr-public-meetings-information>
- **If you have comments on this project:**
  - Submit online: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>
  - Deadline: Friday, November 6, 2025

Please note: the contents of comments submitted to DCR, including your name, town and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website. Additional contact information provided, notably email address, will only be used for outreach on future updates to the subject project or property.
- If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations via email at [mass.parks@mass.gov](mailto:mass.parks@mass.gov)







## Robinson State Park

### Authorized and Unauthorized Trails

- Legend**
- Robinson State Park
  - Intersections
  - Trailhead
  - Parking
  - Restrooms
  - Natural Feature
  - Plastic Table/Area
  - Visa
  - New England Trail
  - DCR Authorized and Unauthorized Trails and Roads Status
  - Authorized
  - Unauthorized
  - Trail Width
  - 6'
  - 15'
  - DCR Wetlands
  - Hydrologic Connection
  - Marsh/Bog
  - Wooded marsh
  - Open Water
  - NRESP Certified Vernal Pools
  - NRESP Potential Vernal Pools
  - Protected & Recreational Open Space
  - Utility ROW
  - 10-foot Contours
  - Town Boundary



**Map Note:**  
80.3% of park is mapped as priority rare species habitat and the entire park is considered archeologically/historically significant.

This map is for trail planning discussion purposes only. It is not an official trail map.  
Version date: 9/12/2025

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end